Thursday, December 11, 2008

Full impact of crisis on RP to hit in '09 BUSINESS / B1

Moody's downgrades RP banks from stable to negative NEWS / A2

$15-B bailout plan nears; layoffs worldwide rise WORLD / A22

15 farmers arrested in CDO; they sang carols vs aerial spraying ACROSS / A15

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS



Showdown on Cha-cha

RP idol: Lord, it's You, not me

By Jerome Aning and Tina G. Santos

ON THE DAY HE RETURNED FROM his latest boxing conquest, the "Pacman's" schedule was as power-packed as his famed punches.

Manny Pacquiao asked Filipinos to "forget politics," ...



GMA faces big rally on Friday

By Dona Pazzibugan and Christine O. Avendaño

CHURCH GROUPS WILL lead tomorrow's multisectoral rally against Charter change (Cha-cha), the first such major demonstration since Malacañang allies revived moves to amend the Constitution and possibly postpone the 2010 national polls.

SHOWDOWN A4



Motel sues Bayani over lost business

By Alcuin Papa

MOTEL A4

FOR MERRY CHRISTMAS

Senate grills, then releases Bolante

By Christine O. Avendaño

SENATE A4

Illinois governor selling Obama's seat arrested

ILLINOIS A4

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

Claimants 1081's prize: So near, so far

CLAIMANTS A4

Defusing 'gunpowder mentality'

By Jocelyn R. Uy

i-TEAM Report

DEFUSING A4

'Joy to the World' makes this mother cry

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Desiree Caluza

JOY TO A4

Didith Reyes: Sultry singer found dead in shanty; 60

By Pocholo Concepcion and Maricar Cinco

DIDITH A4



AT HER PEAK, Didith was ...

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ2 · SUERTRES · FOUR DIGIT · MEGALOTTO 6/45: 3 13 21 36 38 43 — P102,262,181.40

Moody's downgrades RP banks

Outlook revised to negative due to global financial crisis

CREDIT RATING AGENCY MOODY'S INVESTOR SERvice yesterday revised its outlook for the Philippine banking industry from stable to negative, saying the challenging global environment could dampen bank earnings and trigger a rise in loan delinquency.

Moody's also gave a negative outlook for the banking systems of Australia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mongolia and Cambodia in its report, "Asian Banking System Outlook: An Update."

"While the direct impact of the current global financial crisis on banks in Asia-Pacific has been comparatively limited, these changes in the industry outlook reflect expectations that gathering economic head winds from a global recession will increasingly test the resilience and strength of regional banking industries," said Jerry Chen, managing director for Moody's Financial Institutions Group in the Asia Pacific.

Bad loans

Moody's said it will be difficult for banks in the Philippines to maintain an improving trend in asset quality under current conditions.

But it also ruled out the ballooning of bad loans to levels seen earlier in this decade, given the improved leverage and financial health of most local corporations.

During the Asian financial crisis which began in 1997, the banking system in the Philippines suffered from a wave of corporate defaults caused by sharp currency depreciation and interest hikes. The ratio of bad loans to total loans peaked at over 20 percent in 2002, driving banks to be cautious about extending new loans.

However, the cleanup of bad assets has been aided over the past five years by the Special Purpose Vehicle Law that waived some of the taxes and other fees usually collected in the sale or transfer of assets.

Non-performing

Based on the latest Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas report, the nonperforming loans (NPLs) of commercial banks stood at 4.04 percent of total loans at end-September.

On the macroeconomic front, the Moody's report said that while the Philippines was less dependent on merchandise exports than some of its neighbors, the country has less policy flexibility to cushion the impact of the global slowdown.

"Export demand, especially for electronics, has already begun to decline and foreign investment has also decelerated this year," it said.

"The intensification of the global recession could reduce overseas demand for Filipino workers and in some cases may mean layoffs and unemployment," Moody's said.

Moody's expects workers' remittances—which have proven to be a key support for the national economy—to flatten contrary to the BSP's projection of a sustained growth. It said there may even be downside risks in the event of [illegible].

But while Moody's outlook for credit conditions in the Philippine banking system is negative, its outlook for individual bank foreign currency deposit ratings remained positive, reflecting the positive outlook on the country's sovereign ratings, or its debt obligations.

Last January, Moody's raised its sovereign ratings outlook for the Philippines to positive from stable, citing the government's headway in stabilizing its fiscal position and in reducing its reliance on external financing.

Low Meralco users to get power for free

SOME 300,000 CUSTOMERS OF THE Manila Electric Co. who consume less than 21 kilowatt-hours of electricity each month will have one less expense to worry about.

Starting next month, their electricity will be free under a newly issued decision by the Energy Regulatory Commission.

The decision, a response to an omnibus petition filed by the Department of Trade and Industry's Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection (BTRCP), gives a higher discount to existing lifeline consumers.

Under the current lifeline structure, customers consuming 0-20 kWh a month are entitled to a discount of 50 percent, those using 21-50 kWh a reduction of 35 percent, and those consuming 51-100 a discount of 20 percent.

Almost 2 million of Meralco's 4 million residential customers enjoy lifeline discounts.

Another bracket

The ERC also added another consumer bracket—from 0-20 kWh, which will be given a discount of 100 percent.

This shields low power consumers from the full impact of rate increases.

Meralco vice president and utility economics chief Ramon Dela Pena said around 300,000 of the distribution utility's customers fall within the 0-20 kWh range.

The rate impact of the ERC decision on non-lifeliners was still being studied, Dela Pena said.

Apart from the modification of the lifeline structure, the ERC decision also directed Meralco to increase its contracted supply from the National Power Corp., in a bid to reduce the distribution utility's generation charge.

"Meralco is hereby directed to negotiate and contract with Napocor for an increase in its contracted volume for it to match its updated demand forecast figures, less the quantities under its [illegible] power producer contracts, and to report to the Commission within 30 days from receipt of this decision," the decision stated.

Petition denied

In the same decision, the ERC denied a petition to order Meralco to refund to non-lifeline customers the amount paid for lifeline subsidy and to absorb the lifeline rate subsidy.

The petition to order Meralco to buy its supply requirements from the wholesale electricity spot market during off-peak hours and to have distribution rates that are at least equal to or lower than those charged by other private utilities was likewise denied.

Meanwhile, the ERC on Dec. 9 approved a resolution reducing current system loss caps for distribution utilities and electric cooperatives.

Under the resolution, the cap was reduced to 8.5 percent from the current 9.5 percent for distribution utilities and to 13 percent from the current 14 percent for electric cooperatives.

System losses refer to the cost of electricity lost due to non-technical causes such as pilferage, or technical causes.

Under the current set-up, distribution utilities such as Meralco can pass on to customers up to 9.5 percent of its system losses. Anything beyond the cap is absorbed by the company.

The new caps will take effect in the January 2010, the resolution said.

US orders Ping man's extradition

THE NEW YORK DISTRICT COURT that is hearing the case against fugitive police officer Glenn Dumlao has ordered his extradition to the Philippines.

Robert Nardoza, a spokesperson for the US Attorney's Office, confirmed that the United District Court of New York in Long Island has ordered Dumlao's extradition, GMA television reported yesterday.

Nardoza was quoted as saying that Dumlao will have to be extradited within 60 days according to the terms of the extradition treaty between the US and the Philippines.

Reached for comment, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he had yet to receive a report about the US court order.

Justice Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor, chair of Task Force 211 that goes after those implicated in media killings, did not return calls last night.

US authorities arrested Dumlao in November based on a request for extradition from the Philippine government.

Dumlao, a former member of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force during the Estrada administration, was implicated in the 2000 murder of publicist Bubby Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito.

US authorities also arrested last month Dumlao's superior, Cesar Mancao, who was also implicated in Dacer-Corbito case. Mancao is also the subject of extradition proceedings in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. *Norman Bordadora*

Judge who sent Abu chief to jail goes to Sandigan

THE JUDGE WHO CONVICTED ABU Sayyaf leader Hector Janjalani for the kidnapping of American Jeffrey Schilling in 2000 will go to the Sandiganbayan antigraft court as an associate justice.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has appointed Pasig Judge Alex de Leon Quiroz to fill the vacancy in the 15-member court, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said yesterday.

Quiroz, 51, has been presiding judge of the Pasig Regional Trial Court Branch 156 since June 2001.

"This is the only interesting appointment I can share with you," Ermita told reporters in an ambush interview.

In 2004, Quiroz sentenced Janjalani and Muhammad Amin Ajijul to life imprisonment for the 2000 kidnapping of Schilling in Patikul, Sulu, and ordered them to pay the American P100,000 in damages.

Quiroz also served as metropolitan judge at the Pasig Metropolitan Trial Court from March 1993 to June 2001.

After graduating from the Manuel L. Quezon University and passing the bar in 1985, Quiroz practiced law for a year before joining the Office of the City Fiscal from March 1985 to July 1987 as special counsel.

He was a legislative staff officer at the House of Representatives from August 1987 to October 1988, and worked at the Office of the Solicitor General from October 1988 to March 1993.

He is married to Bulletin newspaper reporter Evelyn Quiroz. *TJ Burgonio*

TXTinfo — WINNING NUMBERS FOR DECEMBER 10, 2008: 54 10 24 40 10 — JACKPOT: P10,063,248.57



OUTSTANDING POLICEWOMEN

Napolcom welcomes Miriam's bill on PNP

Igorot rights advocates, fans troop to actor's wake

HIJACKED IN SOMALIA

Pirates free 17 Pinoy seamen

By Cynthia D. Balana

Safety nets

No government

Monthly mortgage

No military action

Pacman entertains No. 1 fan at Palace

Carrot cake

Holding back his punches

House visit



Philippine idol shares his prayer: Lord, it's You, and not me

Public address system

Finish school

Don't spend unnecessarily

Defender of the faith

Senate grills Bolante, releases him with a merry Christmas

Christmas gift?

'Spare me'

Prison terms

'Strong warning'

Didith Reyes: Sultry singer found dead in shanty; 60

Femme fatale

A la Judy Garland

Downward spiral

Homeless

Make your shopping a fun and enjoyable experience. Check out our great gift selections for your loved ones



THE LANDMARK

MAKATI TRINOMA

CHR: Some bright spots, but overall record dismal

Victims of abuses, militants hold protest marches

Claimants 1081's prize: So near, and yet so far for a long time

Defusing 'gunpowder mentality' in the military starts at PMA

'Joy to the World' makes this mother cry

AFP chief reports MILF links with Abu kidnappers



YANO

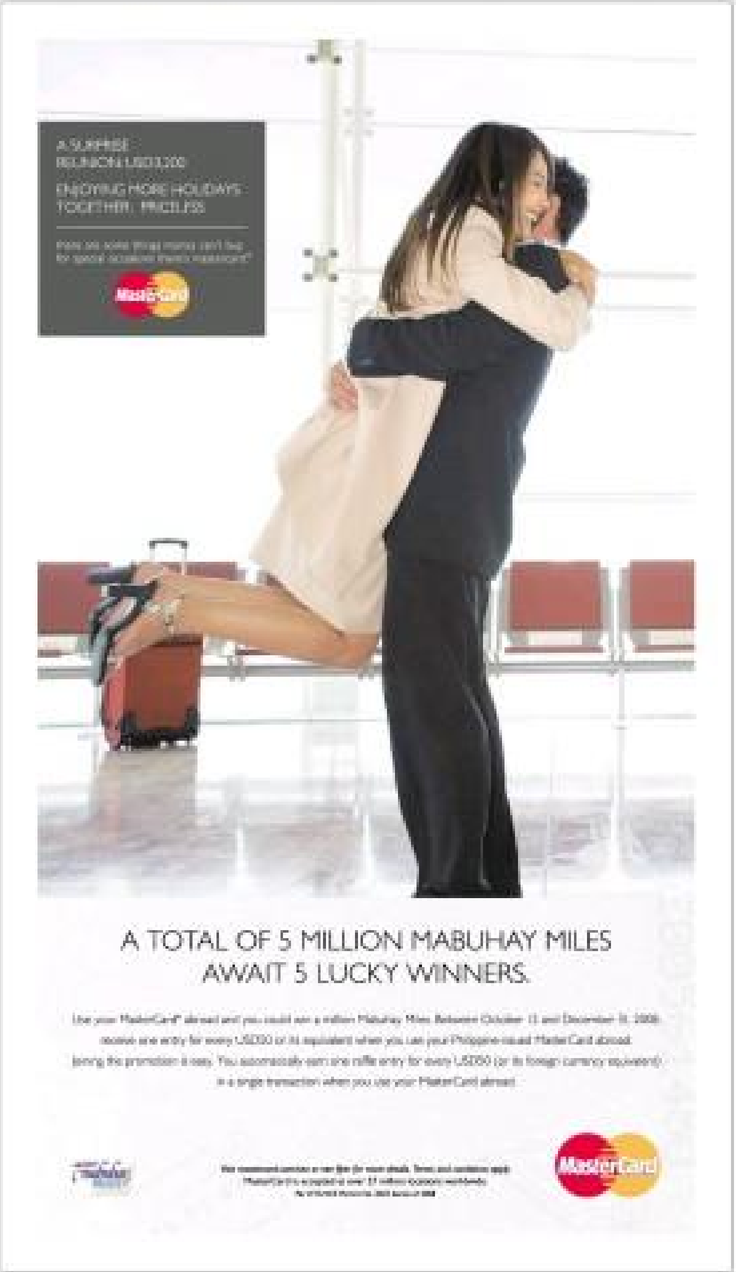




Jocelyn R. Uy

THE DAILY GOSPEL





Cops tell motorists: Skip Makati central business district

Showdown on Charter change

Coalition on collision course

Motel sues Bayani over lost business

Illinois governor selling Obama's seat arrested

TIME RUNNING OUT

Farmers press Congress on CARP

By Mosie Papa and Leila B. Salaverria

[illegible]

Another caucus

[illegible]

Hunger strike

[illegible]

PGH tissue bank named after founder

[illegible]


AGCAOILI

Brief history

[illegible]

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council
HOUSING AND LAND USE REGULATORY BOARD

RESOLUTION NO. 833
Series of 2008

DECLARING HABITAT FOR HUMANITY PHILIPPINES PROJECTS AS PROJECTS NOT COVERED BY THE LICENSE TO SELL OF HLURB

[illegible]

APPROVED, [illegible] October 2008, Pasay City


Q U I E T
PAL Express Q Series: One of the world's quietest.
The Bombardier Q Series is equipped with the revolutionary
ANVS (Active Noise Vibration Suppression) system. Originally designed for stealth submarines,
the technology has since been incorporated into the design of turboprops; pioneered by the Bombardier Q Series.
Enjoy an extraordinarily quiet flight with PAL Express. Virtually free of vibration and noise,
the PAL Express Q Series makes every flight a comfortable and pleasant experience.
PAL express


BCO'S 8th ANNUAL
November 1
PLDT
With multiple site surveillance capability, motion detectors, auto video recordi
PLDT Watcher is the easiest way to monitor what's going on in your company anytime, a
log on to www.pldtsme-nation.com.ph, e-mail info@pldtsme-nation.com.ph or visit any PLDT Busi

Court ends presentation of evidence vs Misuari

By Allison W. Lopez

CITING THE GOVERNMENT'S REPEATED failure to produce witnesses, the Makati Regional Trial Court ended the prosecution's presentation of evidence in the rebellion case against former Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) chair Nur Misuari.

In a two-page order, Judge Winlove Dumayas of the Makati RTC Branch 59 waived the prosecution's right to present evidence. It denied its motion for reconsideration for lack of merit.

Misuari was charged with rebellion for allegedly leading an armed uprising of MNLF rebels in Sulu in November 2001 which resulted in loss of lives on both the rebel and government sides.

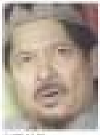
The prosecution earlier said they had tried to contact victims of the uprising but due to the current conflict between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (another secessionist group), they failed to appear at the hearings.

"The victims should be given a chance to prove damages to their property and loss of lives," the prosecution maintained.

The defense had countered that there was no need to present the supposed victims since rebellion was a crime against public order, hence there were no private complainants.

They also stressed that the court had been just in terminating the prosecution's presentation of evidence for their continued failure to produce witnesses.

The court sided with the defense.



MISUARI

It said the slow pace of the presentation of witnesses violated the accused's constitutional right to a speedy trial.

The presentation of evidence on the side of the accused was ordered set at the earliest available time.

Misuari, who is out on bail, was recently allowed by the court to travel to Saudi Arabia to visit the king and attend a family reunion.

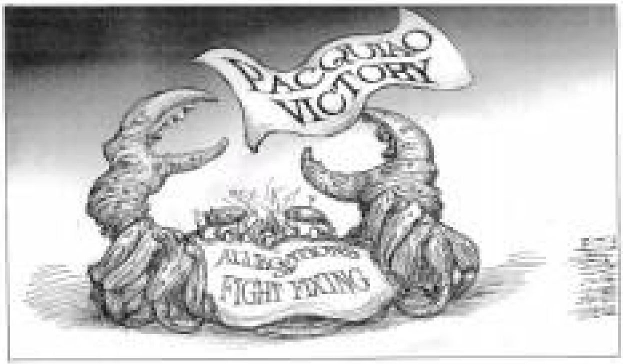
His temporary liberty has been criticized by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, who is in jail while undergoing trial for rebellion in connection with two failed military uprisings in Metro Manila—the so-called Oakwood and Peninsula Manila incidents.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Lawyers versus judges

EDITORIAL



Cribs, coffins and visas

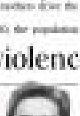
VIEWPOINT



Juan L. Mercado

History of violence

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

Possible fireworks at ministerial sessions

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



'Droits de l'homme': world's best-kept secret

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo



Christmas tragedies

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III



What's there to fear?

YOUNG BLOOD

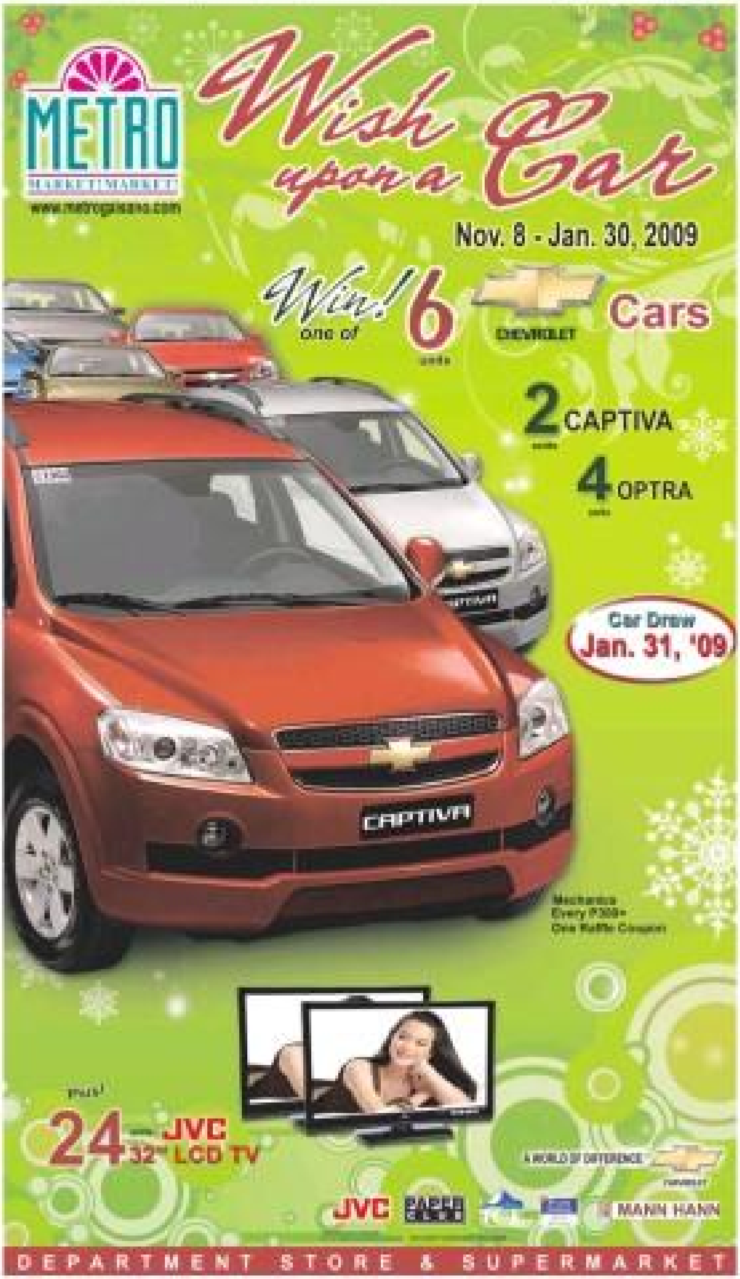
LETTERS

Adopt tree-planting program to generate more employment

A reminder: 'Pagkatao, higit sa partihan'

No more legal means to hold administration officials accountable?

Gov't urged to heed CESCR's advice



Across the NATION

₱15 wage hike OKd in W. Visayas



HIGH FASHION

In the Cordillera, g-strings are high fashion, even for children. G-strings are actually expensive, because they are woven by hand.

15 farmers arrested as they sang carols vs aerial spraying

'Is this how carolers are being treated in Cagayan de Oro?'

Gov't unveils Boracay land use rules

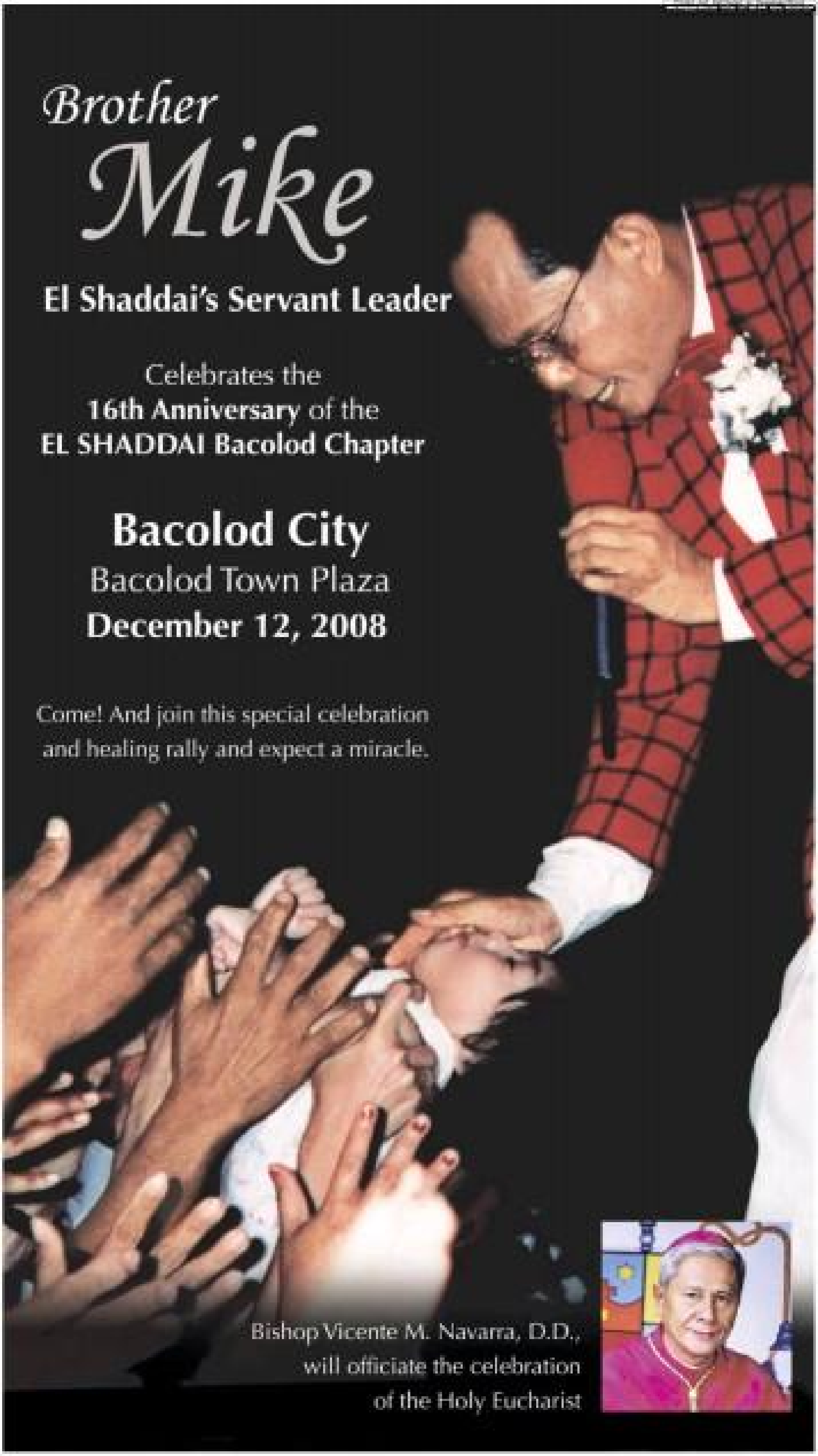
Pampanga grills 4,000 kg of 'tilapia'



PAMPANGA grilled 4,000 kg of tilapia as a dry run for the top-producing tilapia-growing province's bid to chart a world record.

Top producer

1st attempt


Brother
Mike
El Shaddai's Servant Leader
Celebrates the
16th Anniversary of the
EL SHADDAI Bacolod Chapter
Bacolod City
Bacolod Town Plaza
December 12, 2008
Come! And join this special celebration
and healing rally and expect a miracle.
Bishop Vicente M. Navarra, D.D.,
will officiate the celebration
of the Holy Eucharist

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Stars of hope for Marinduque prisoners

By Gerald Gene R. Querubin
Boac, Marinduque

SYMBOLIZING THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM THAT guided the Three Wise Men to the manger of the new-born Jesus Christ, the lantern or parol has given new meaning to prisoners at the provincial jail in Marinduque.

[illegible]

Entrepreneurs

[illegible]



AN INMATE at the Marinduque provincial jail makes lanterns under the "Sagip-Buhay ng Pasko" program.

[illegible]

Small food budget

[illegible]

Laguna teacher finds fulfillment in school for special kids

By Romulo O. Ponte
San Pablo City

WHEN SHE WAS A child, Ms. Joselia Velasco had wanted to become a pharmacist or a nun someday. But circumstances and events in her life led her away from her dreams, and she ended up teaching special children.



JOSELIA Velasco of the Paaralan ng Pag-asa at Pag-asa

[illegible]

Turning point

[illegible]

Mutual learning

[illegible]

This library is also for interactive storytelling

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Naga City

FOR TWO YEARS now, the Children's Booklist Program of the Raul S. Roco Library (RSR Library) in Naga City has been developing the habit of reading among preschoolers in "educare" (education day care) centers and elementary pupils of up to Grade 2.



SCHOOLCHILDREN from Naga City listen intently as Kristian Cordero, a Palanca awardee for fiction in English, reads his story during the Inquirer Read-Along at the Raul S. Roco Library.

[illegible]

Teaching hearts, minds

[illegible]

Storytellers

[illegible]

Comprehension

[illegible]

SPORTS

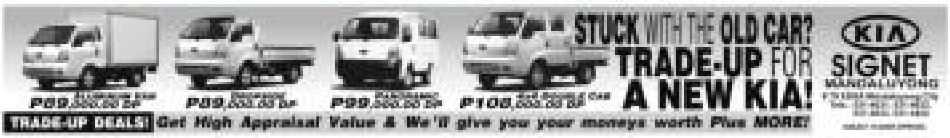
Red Bull shocks off-form Alaska

Barako finally end franchise-worst eight-game losing skein



Rookie's crucial role

Worst form



A plus METRO

Editor: Abelardo S. Ulanday

DID YOU KNOW

Slain tollway man had powder burns

But PNP refuses to categorically say if he was a member of rob gang



By Marco C. Carvajal and Marlon Ramos

THE TOLLWAY WORKER KILLED IN FRIDAY'S gun battle between policemen and suspected robbers in Parañaque near the headquarters of Skyway Corp. in Bicutan was found positive for powder burns, Metro Manila's top police official said.

NBI agents told: No raids starting today till Jan. 1

Man mauled after arguing with 3 women; files raps

By Tina G. Santos



GLOW IN THE FOUNTAIN
Bright and colorful Christmas lights and lanterns bring a joyous glow to the water fountain on Ayala Avenue and Gil Puyat Avenue in Makati City.

Unattended candle causes fire

By DJ Yap

MetroBriefs

Killed over a bet

Nabbed for drugs

New hospital annex

Paskong Piney ongoing

Public apathy encourages more cops to misbehave

On Target
Ramon Tulfo



₱100,000 reward money set for rob gang members

By Tina G. Santos

Private sector invited

Positive identification

India asks UN council to ban Pakistan group





Human remains found in secret Argentine jail

Drowning, accidents kill 800,000 kids a year

WorldBriefs

Environment fugitives

Mistaken US strike

'Cat-astrophe' fixed

Seeing red

Kiss of deaf

Envy is a dog's life

Cancer as No. 1 killer

Weight loss

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Quezon

US auto bailout nears; global layoffs rise

HONG KONG/LONDON—A $15-BILLION PLAN TO bail out US automakers moved ahead on Wednesday, while miner Rio Tinto said it was cutting 14,000 jobs in response to the global downturn.

According to officials, the US House of Representatives may vote as early as Wednesday on a $15-billion plan to bail out and restructure US automakers, but the initiative may face possible roadblocks in the Senate.

The White House and congressional Democrats sought to quickly finalize an agreement in principle struck on Tuesday night on conditions for providing low-interest loans to avert a threatened industry collapse if one or more of the Detroit Three automakers were to fail.

"Bipartisan hard work has paid off," said Democratic Sen. Carl Levin of Michigan where home state headquarters General Motors Corp., Ford Motor Co. and Chrysler LLC.

News from Europe, however, was grim. French industrial output plummeted in October, dragged down by the largest fall in auto production since August 1999.

Rio Tinto responded to collapsing demand by saying it will cut 13 percent of its workforce and reduce capital expenditure by $4.8 billion in 2009. The company said it acted in response to "the unprecedented rapidity and severity of the global economic downturn."

Jobs are evaporating around the globe as the credit crisis pushes much of the developed world toward recession.

Sweden's SKF, the world's biggest bearings maker, said it would cut 2,500 jobs because of weaker demand. On Tuesday, Japanese electronics giant Sony Corp. said it planned to cut $1.1 billion in costs, including the elimination of 16,000 jobs.

There were bleaker reports from Asia. Japanese companies slashed machinery investment in October in another ominous sign for the world's second-largest economy.

China's economy also showed further evidence of cooling, with factory gate inflation collapsing in November to 2 percent, prompting fears that deflation may be ahead.

The plunge in China's wholesale inflation rate further dented hopes that resiliency there would ease the pain of recession elsewhere.

The World Bank predicted on Wednesday that China's economy would grow 7.5 percent next year and 8.5 percent in 2010—far below the expected 9.4 percent for the current year and the 11.9 percent recorded in 2007.

"The situation is quite severe. We are slipping into a deflationary economic risk pretty fast," said Isaac Meng, an economist with BNP Paribas in Beijing.

Investors fearful of deflation and fickle assets scrambled to hand over cash to the US Treasury in return for no interest in an auction on Tuesday, while rates on some Treasury bills fell below zero in the market.

When rates turn negative, it shows investors are so concerned about the safety of assets that they are willing to effectively pay the US government a fee to hold their cash.

"There's still a ton of fear. People are now paying the government to take their money. Something is wrong," said Joe Saluzzi, a manager at Themis Trading in Chatham, New Jersey.

With limited scope for further interest rate cuts from the present levels of 1 percent, economists are expecting the US Federal Reserve to look at new ways to boost the supply and circulation of money to avoid a deflationary slump.

The Wall Street Journal reported that the Fed was considering issuing its own debt for the first time.

Fed officials have approached Congress about the move, which could include issuing bills or some other form of debt and would provide the central bank with more flexibility to tackle the financial crisis, the Journal said.

Asian and European stocks rallied on Wednesday on hopes governments worldwide will help out ailing industries and implement stimulus measures as they fight back against a deepening economic crisis. *Reuters*

CDO Awarded as Outstanding Manufacturer of Christmas Ham

The country's largest consumers' organization has recognized meat processing firm CDO-Foodsphere Inc. as the most outstanding manufacturer of Christmas ham for the second year in a row.

CDO, the company behind CDO Holiday Whole-Meat Ham, received the prestigious recognition during the 19th Annual National Consumers Awards (ANCA) bestowed by the Consumers Union of the Philippines (CUP) in October this year.

This was the second straight year that CDO was chosen as the outstanding Christmas ham manufacturer, proving that the company has perfected the art of ham processing, by combining experience, quality and innovation, according to CDO senior marketing manager Jonathan Bendicion.

CUP awards committee headed by their president Quirino Manguiwan handed the award to CDO executives led by founder Corazon Dayro Ong during a ceremony held at the Manila Hotel on October 17.

Bendicion said the award speaks well of the quality of CDO Holiday Whole-Meat Ham, the flagship Christmas ham product of the 35-year-old company and now the most popular ham brand in supermarkets this Christmas season.

CDO Holiday Whole-Meat Ham is a traditional ham, which is 100-percent derived from whole pork leg muscle. It is slowly smoked, fully cooked, seasoned in special blends of herbs and glazed with pineapple jelly to bring out its luscious flavor.

To sustain the good quality of CDO Holiday Whole-Meat Ham, the company makes sure that all materials, ingredients, and processes used are in accordance with internationally recognized standards.

This Christmas season, make your loved ones feel special by giving them CDO Holiday Whole-Meat Ham, the ham choice of Filipino consumers.

For more information about whole-meat hams, contact 296-1111.





WHAT'S INSIDE

■ PSC inaugurates sports institute /A24

SPORTS



■ James, Cavs post ninth straight rout /A26

Mayweather wants Pacman, too

By Francis T.J. Ochoa
Assistant Sports Editor





FLOYD Mayweather Jr.

Jinkee giving birth in US



JINKEE Pacquiao

LA fights for 2 RP pugs

PSC inaugurates sports institute



RAMIREZ



PANGILINAN

Army, Giligans forge FPL title battle Sunday



Blue Thunders keep semifinal bid alive

Manlapaz leads Binay Cup table tennis champs

SPORTSWATCH

P1 million prize for Masters Poker

Roligon 5-cocker today

Champs join SJC cocklest

Pacquiao: Tale of quiet courage and heroism

BARE EYE



Recah Trinidad



Benedictine IS clinches Seasa cage crown

POF national finals under way

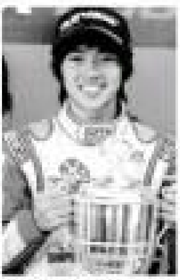


Harbour guns for win No. 8



David, Chua favorites to become new billiards idol

Orduna emerges Asia's best junior karter



Kepner seeks 2nd Quick 8 win Saturday

Manila Southwoods' Chairman's Cup tees off today

La Salle-Ateneo Match Play Dec. 19



SPORTS

NBA STANDINGS

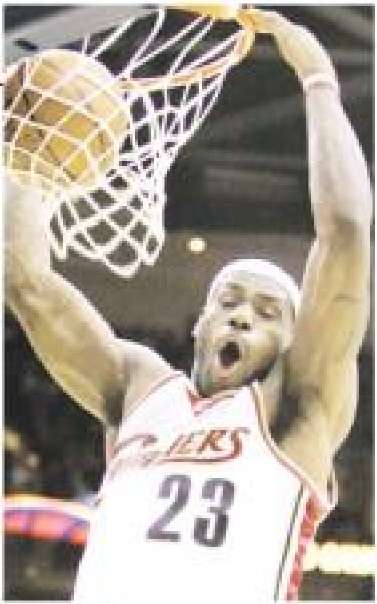
EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	22	2	.909	–
New Jersey	11	8	.579	7.5
Philadelphia	9	12	.429	10.5
New York	9	12	.429	10.5
Toronto	8	12	.400	11.5
Central	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	19	3	.864	–
Detroit	11	9	.550	6.0
Chicago	10	11	.476	8.0
Milwaukee	9	14	.391	10.0
Indiana	7	13	.350	10.5
Southeast	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	17	5	.773	–
Atlanta	12	8	.600	4.0
Miami	12	9	.571	4.5
Charlotte	7	14	.333	9.5
Washington	4	15	.211	11.5

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest	W	L	Pct	GB
New Orleans	11	6	.647	0.5
Houston	14	8	.636	–
San Antonio	12	8	.600	1.0
Dallas	11	9	.550	2.0
Memphis	6	15	.286	7.5
Northwest	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	14	7	.667	–
Portland	15	8	.652	–
Utah	14	9	.609	1.0
Minnesota	4	16	.200	9.5
Oklahoma City	2	20	.091	12.5
Pacific	W	L	Pct	GB
LA Lakers	17	3	.850	–
Phoenix	12	9	.571	5.5
Golden State	6	15	.286	11.5
Sacramento	6	16	.273	12.0
LA Clippers	4	17	.190	13.5

James, Cavs post ninth straight rout



CLEVELAND Cavaliers' LeBron James slams the ball in. AP

McDyess back in Detroit

Lewis banners 2009 boxing hall of fame



LEWIS secures place in boxing hall of fame. AP

SPORTSWATCH

Ballesteros released two months after brain surgery

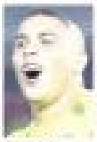
Jamaica names Walker, Bolt Athletes of the Year

Phelps' 'No Limits' out



PHELPS AP

Corinthians gets Ronaldo



RONALDO AP

IN THIS ISSUE

- **PLDT to buy back** additional 1M shares /B4
- **Hanjin set to build** more ships /B6

BUSINESS

IN THIS ISSUE

- **RP eyes** additional sugar exports to US in '09 /B2

Full impact of crisis on RP seen in '09

Currencies



Stock Market

Late bargain-hunting lifts stocks



Higher unemployment, slower growth

IT IS A WAKE-UP CALL FOR LOCAL POLICYMAKERS who still believe that the country will escape the effects of the global financial crisis unscathed.

Exports fell 14.9% in October to $3.97B





RP eyes additional sugar exports to US in '09

Existing sugar surplus 'uncomfortably huge'

Case of death

BREAKTIME



Conrado R. Banal III

Net foreign investments inflow up 870% in Sept.

9-month performance still 45% lower than $2.5B a year ago

SMC seen investing in Liberty Telecom

MPIC gets ₱6.7B in fund

Breaktime

PLDT to buy back additional 1M shares

Declares dividends on preferred shares

[illegible]

BDO sees sharp slowdown in lending in '09

[illegible]

SM Prime eyes ₱5-B borrowing next year

[illegible]

Full . . .

From page B1

[illegible]

Exports . . .

From page B1

[illegible]

[illegible]

People, Events & Products

With ePLDT as partner, insurance company is always prepared



8TH WORLD BAZAAR FESTIVAL OPENS

ACER PHILS FIRST TO CARRY INTEL CORE i7



500 MILLION BRIGHT SMILES AROUND THE WORLD



Product Files

Twice the yum and fun with Magic Creams Doble





ALLGEN CONDUCTS 1ST MEDICAL MISSION

Genaco Pharma launches Krebb C

Bits & Clips

Best practices vs. hospital lawsuits

RMHS batch 69 golden anniversary

Anchor Land's 9-month net income up 205%

King of Warrior EX at GMA7

'Speech that Connects' seminar-lab

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 90, QUEZON CITY

Business

Hanjin set to build more ships



Golden province of Mindanao

MindanaWorld

Jewelry industry

Solidarity ring

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

LIFESTYLE Food



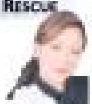




KOOL Twist Cones

Pizza in cones, banana split cones and cone canapés

KITCHEN RESCUE



Reggie Aspiras



Fores and Mackay share 'kitchen diamond'

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor



TUBER magnatum or fresh white truffles from Italy



CARPACCIO US wagyu, polenta and olives at Pepato



BUTTERED fresh egg tagliolini, nutmeg and shaved white truffle at Rala



VEAL scallopine at Pepato

Subtle flavor

Season in Florence

Recipes of 'ladies who lunch'

COUNTRY COOKING



Micky Fenix



Heirloom recipes

An Astralis meal can be as heady as the fine wine it has been named after



STRAWBERRY-PEACH tartlets



ASTRALIS' minimalist interior



SEATING for those who love the outdoor



PORK Scaloppini

Diamond's bestsellers now in Makati

By Linda B. Bolido

Tapas



LINDA Javin, Astralis catering chef



TAGLIATELLE and Beef Strips



Lolo Dad's Brasserie is the latest buzz



APPETIZER: Poached prawn

LOLO DAD'S, THE RESTAURANT for which many brave the Manila traffic just to relish its fine cuisine (it's all the way in Quirino Ave.), has opened a brasserie in Makati's business district, and it's been packed since day one. What makes it click?

Couple behind fine dining resto brings interesting cuisine to Makati

No duplicated items



SOUP: Shredded duck and sherry

Taste of ingenuity

How old is the Philippines' oldest fruitcake?



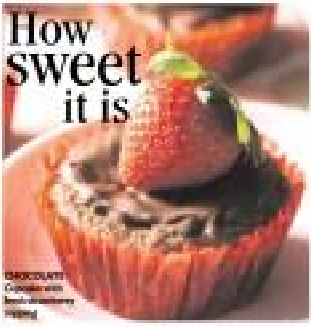
JAJD's fruitcake

Jay Leno





How sweet it is



Millsmaid Chocolate Cupcake with fresh strawberry topping

Pizza in cones . . .



Mrs. Field's Cookie Cake

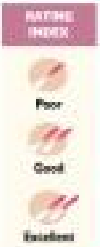
Omakase's crabstick canape

LIFESTYLE Food



From Mexican treats to Chinese noodles and Pinoy barbecue

THE QUIET DINER
REVIEWS AT A GLANCE



WORSENING TRAFFIC has confined us to the south of Metro Manila—a Mexican restaurant, a Chinese eatery in a new enclave and a food court in a busy mall.

Mexicali

Mexicali, California Mexican Kitchen, a chain. UG/F, Corte de las Palmas, Ayala Town Center, tel. nos. 720-3158/695-1919.

Dining area. It's a bit dark at night. Its popularity apparent, guests continue to file in at dinner. Wooden tables have small typical Aztec tiles on each corner.

Staff. Upon entering, we noticed one waiter behind the counter, spooning something from a glass and putting the spoon in his mouth. The rest were enthusiastic and presented the menu.

Service. Regular, nothing outstanding.

Suggested meal. Cheese and Garlic Quesadilla, any of the tacos or a nice plate of Chili con Carne or Arroz à la Cubana. For dessert, Banana Flambé or any of the Sweet Quesadillas. There is a choice of beverages.

Usual service charges. Given 20-percent senior citizens' discount.

Rating

Mongkok

Mongkok, dim sum and noodles. G/F Summer Court, Dr. Santos Ave. cor. Sucat, Parañaque City. This belongs to a chain, which has not been getting good reviews. This one rescues the damaged image.

Dining area. Very Chinese with red interiors. This is bright and airy.

Staff. Seemingly very eager to serve.

Service. Standard.

Suggested meal. Appetizer combination (P220), Dim sum of Mongkok Siomai, Hackey Dumplings, Stuffed Tofu, Taro Puff. Get the Chef's Specials: Salt and Pepper Squid, Cantonese Chow Mien, Chicken with Mango Sauce, all starting from P160. For dessert, try Mango Sago or Almond Jelly with Lychee. They warn that prices may change without warning.

Rating

Reyes Barbecue

Reyes Barbecue at the Food Court of Ayala Town Center. We wanted to go fast and easy with a meal, thus this one.

Dining area. As with all food court areas, this was crowded. We made our order, paid and found ourselves a table and chairs.

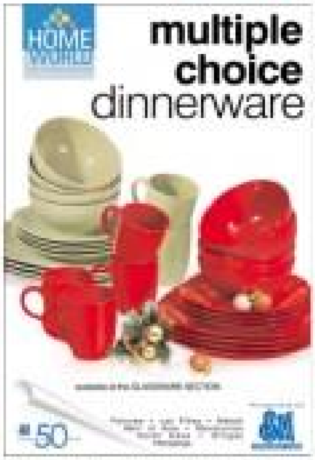
No waiter service and not much staff.

Suggested meal. For less risk of developing cholesterol, we had Chicken Barbecue and Grilled Liempo. Both were flavorful.

Rating

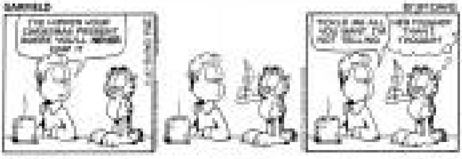




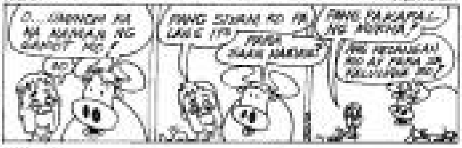




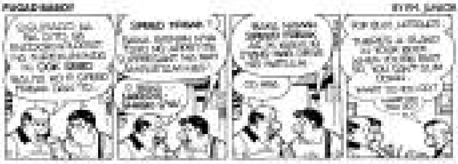
GARFIELD



A. UPIN

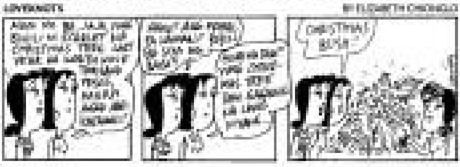


PUGAD BABOY



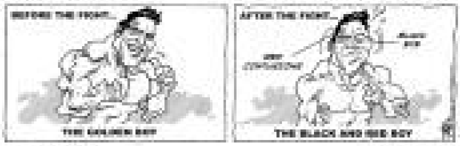
DICK TRACY





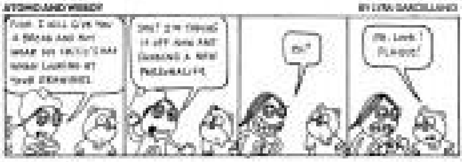
JAMES BOND





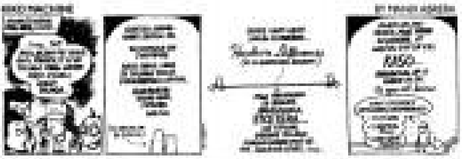
BABY BLUES



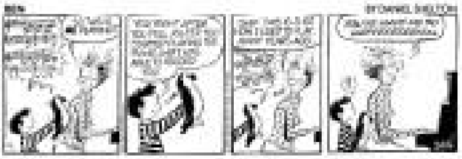




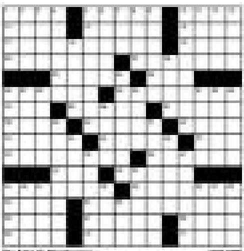
KIKO MACHINE

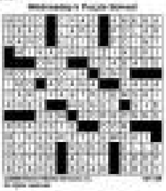


BEN



DAILY CROSSWORD





HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis SudoKu — By Dave Green

	1	9	8		4			7
6	3			1				
							5	
9				4		8	2	
	7	4		9				1
	6							
				3			8	2
4			2		7	3	9	

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Answer to previous puzzle

It's time for The Pen's Christmas concert





THE PHILIPPINE Philharmonic Orchestra

Honey oatmeal raisin cookies



HONEY Oatmeal Raisin Cookies

OATS ARE RICH IN FIBER and are said to help lower one's cholesterol level.

Honey Oatmeal Raisin Cookies

Tips

Showcase of home and kitchen ware



Yule party treats



CONGO Pork Sisig

Do your own ready-to-bake cookie mix

Chippers in a jar

Brownies in a jar

Cookie baking mix

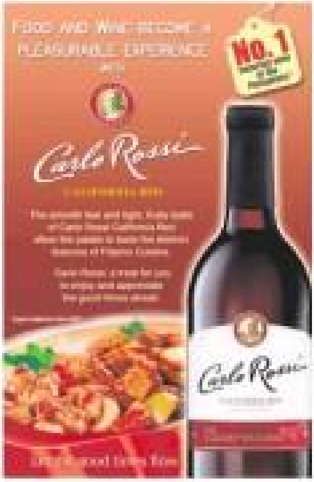
Baking cookie mix

Chocolate raisin and oatmeal cookie mix

Chef's banquet



BUBBA GUMP'S NEW MENU



DINING OUT

Christmas luxuries

Michelin star dining

Yuletide sushi platters

Holiday hits



SEAFOOD BUFFET

Chinese holiday treats

Mediterranean buffet



BEST OF RP SEAFOOD





ASIAN BUFFET



SWEET DESTINATION

Lito Zulueta & Volante
ENTERTAINMENT

BETH TAMAYO

WISH LIST

"I WISH FOR unity in the business. Judy Ann [illegible] and I were talking about how the industry now looks [illegible] competitive [illegible]. [illegible] with FPJ (Fernando Poe Jr.) and Rudy (Rudy Fernandez) whom we all respected so much. We supported all their causes. Nowadays, when we invite actors to occasions for even good causes, only a few of them show up." *Marinel Cruz*





SHAINA Magdayao

Shaina learns from big sis' mistakes

By [illegible]

SHAINA MAGDAYAO RAISED the subject during the press conference for her new ABS-CBN *teleserye*, "Komiks Presents Mars Ravelo's Dragonna."

Actually, she said, "I've learned from my sister's mistakes."

Shaina said she picked up the lesson of patience from older sis Vina Morales, who is five months pregnant with her first child by boyfriend Cedric Lee.

"Not to rush love," she noted. "To be careful. It's hard to pick yourself up after you stumble."

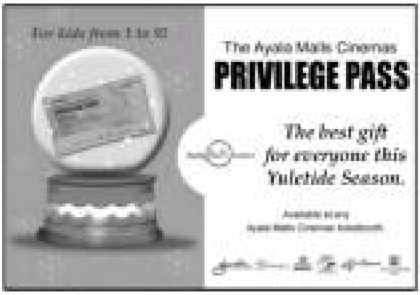
Hastily, she clarified that she doesn't consider Vina's condition a "mistake."

"My ate has been wanting to have a baby for so long," Shaina said. "It would be unfair if she got pregnant [when she's] older."

Shaina admitted that it's been a

SHAINA E2









Mackintosh producer takes a bow



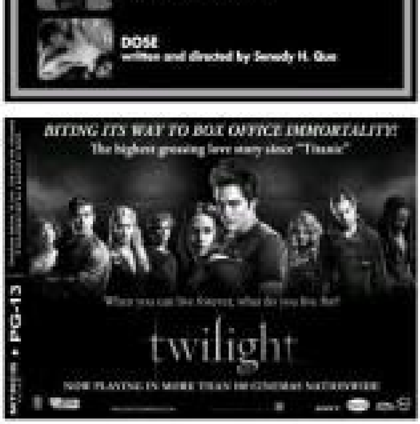
JOHN Robertson (second from L), executive producer of Sir Cameron Mackintosh's hit musicals in Asia and Australia, visits Sta. Rita, Pampanga for the third time to watch a performance of Filipino artists dedicated to promoting the Kapampangan culture through world-class talents.

Faceless no more

Happy for fest









Shaina...

Exclusively dating

‘Secrets’ of musical stardom bared

VIEWFINDER
Nestor U. Torre

> ‘Sort of’ puts you in the chorus; ‘really well’ pushes you up to lead status

Feedback

Pinoy music legends

‘Yes Man!’

'08 TOP SNAPS



REACH OUT AND TOUCH World Food Program National Ambassador KC Concepcion spends her birthday April 2 with orphans at the Marco Polo Children's Center of Virlanie Foundation in Makati.



FLUTTERY ENTRANCE Sarah Jessica Parker arrives for the world premiere of "Sex And The City: The Movie" at Leicester Square in London May 12.

Ogie with Idols at Aliw Theater

"THE IDOL EXPERIENCE: OGIE SINGS with the Idols" goes onstage on Dec. 20 and 21 at the Aliw Theater, CCP Complex. The show features Ogie Alcasid with "American Idol" Season 7 Fil-Am finalist Ramiele Malubay, "Pinoy Idol" grand winner Gretchen Espina and indie rock band Mymp. Call 891-9999 or 911-5555.

'Broadway 2'

Mother Eugenie Theater of the Assumption presents "Broadway 2," sequel to its 2007 production, on Dec. 13, 7 p.m. and Dec. 14, 3 p.m. at the Mother Rose Auditorium, Assumption College San Lorenzo, Makati. The musical features songs from "Flower Drum Song," "South Pacific" and "King and I," with a cast of 175 including students, teachers, staff, parents, alumnae and guest artists. Call 817-0751 loc. 1160 or 3301.

SHOW TIME

'Momeena'

The UST College of Arts and Letters Class '84 presents singer-actress Mitoy Cuvilas in "Momeena," a conversation show about love and relationships tonight, 7:30 p.m. at Conspiracy Bar, Visayas Avenue, Quezon City. The show also features ... and ... Color It Red plays afterwards.

A Siti Christmas

On Dec. 17, 8 p.m. at Music Museum, Siti performs songs from her Christmas album "Pasyong Pasko"—like "All I Want for Christmas," "Santa Baby," "Winter Wonderland" and "Someday at Christmas." Special guests are Christian Bautista, Richard Poon, and Himig ng Pilipinas Children's Choir.

Tonight

- Billy People's Inspect "Electric at Mag:Net Katipunan, QC.
- Aurelio and the Sealed Sol Band at Merk's Bar & Bistro, Level 3, Greenbelt 3, Makati. Call 757-4728 to 31.
- Johnny & Rukoy at '70s Bistro, Anonas St., Proj. 3, QC. Call 434-3597.

Tomorrow

- Affliction, Bellini, Irazo, Ole Pink & Blank, Four Theory, Makoto, The Mosquo at Mag:Net Katipunan.

Soulfe 79 at Merk's Bar & Bistro
Noel Cabangon at '70s Bistro



RAMIELE Malubay



OGIE Alcasid



SITTI

ENTERTAINMENT

Just can't stop the beat!

BACKSTORY

Lea Salonga





NICOLE backstage with "Hairspray's" Michael de Mesa

Charm to spare

> I'd like hear more clearly what some new actors are saying onstage

Two complaints

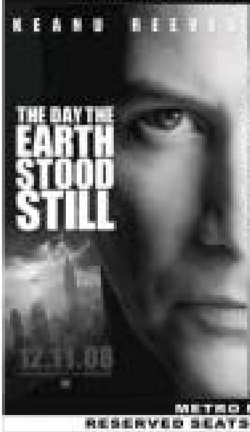
Charismatic cast

Bangkok, for sure

Wish list

SM Cinema movietime

LOG ON TO 'WWW.SMCINEMA.COM' TO WIN EXCLUSIVE "THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL" PREMIUM ITEMS!



"The Day the Earth Stood Still" is 20th Century Fox's contemporary reinvention of its 1951 classic. Keanu Reeves portrays Klaatu, an alien whose arrival on our planet triggers a global upheaval. As governments and scientists race to unravel the mystery behind the visitor's appearance, a woman (Jennifer Connelly) and her young stepson get caught up in his mission – and come to understand the ramifications of his being a self-described "friend to the Earth".

NOW SHOWING AT IMAX THEATRES and Regular SM Cinemas

METRO MANILA

RESERVED SEATS NOW AVAILABLE

IMAX	THE PODIUM	
MADAGASCAR 2: ESCAPE TO AFRICA	TWILIGHT	CINEMA 1
SEA MONSTER	THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL	THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
DINOSAUR	LATE SCREENINGS	
THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL		

LUZON

SOON TO OPEN

VISAYAS - MINDANAO

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS NOW ACCEPTED IN ALL SM CINEMA BRANCHES

LIVE AT SM CINEMAS!

MOVIEWORLD

CINEMA ACCESS: 635-5555

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMA MOVIE GUIDE

GALLERIA

1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
2 TWILIGHT
3 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
4 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL / JAMES BOND 22
5 QUARANTINE
6 BOLT
7 LOVE BIRDS
8 Indieflix: CINEMA ONE ORIGINALS
9 100
10 PRIDE AND GLORY / FOUR CHRISTMASES

ERMITA

1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
2 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
3 TWILIGHT
4 QUARANTINE / BOLT
5 FOUR CHRISTMASES
6 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
7 PRIDE AND GLORY / TWILIGHT
8 100
9 LOVEBIRDS

METRO EAST

1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
2 TWILIGHT
3 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
4 PRIDE AND GLORY
5 FOUR CHRISTMASES
6 QUARANTINE
7 BOLT
8 SCAREDIVERS

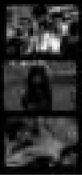
NOVALICHES

1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
2 TWILIGHT
3 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
4 WALANG KAWALA

PIONEER

1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
2 TWILIGHT
3 FOUR CHRISTMASES
4 PRIDE AND GLORY

ITO ANG BAGONG SINENG PINOY!



UPCAT directed by Roman Olivarez

YANGGAW

DOSE written and directed by Seendy H. Sto

STA. ROSA

1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
2 TWILIGHT
3 LIVING HELL
4 SCAREDIVERS

LIPA

1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
2 TWILIGHT
3 QUARANTINE
4 BURIED ALIVE

DASMARINAS

1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
2 TWILIGHT
3 SCAREDIVERS
4 MONSTER SLAYER

IMUS

1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
2 TWILIGHT
3 SCAREDIVERS
4 SEX DRIVE

ANGELES

1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
2 TWILIGHT
3 MONSTER SLAYER
4 MAKE IT HAPPEN

STARMILLS

1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
2 TWILIGHT
3 ONE TRUE LOVE
4 SCAREDIVERS
5 MONSTER SLAYER
6 QUARANTINE

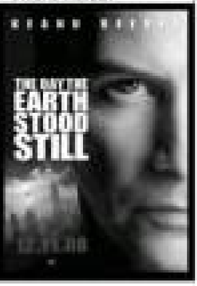
BACOLOD

1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
2 TWILIGHT
3 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
4 SEX DRIVE
5 BURN AFTER READING
6 CITY of EMBER

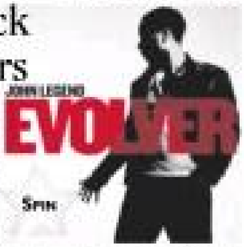
ILOILO

1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
2 TWILIGHT
3 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
4 MONSTER SLAYER
5 STRANGERS
6 TROPIC THUNDER

NOW SHOWING at Robinsons MOVIEWORLD



The Legend's back —'Evolver' delivers



SPIN

[illegible]

Trite but sweet

[illegible]

Sensual lyricism

[illegible]

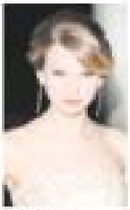
Ernesto G. Velarde

Stars lead ABC's New Year fete

CHEER FACTOR

[illegible]

AP



TAYLOR Swift



BRITNEY Spears

Britney tops online search list again

DID YOU KNOW...

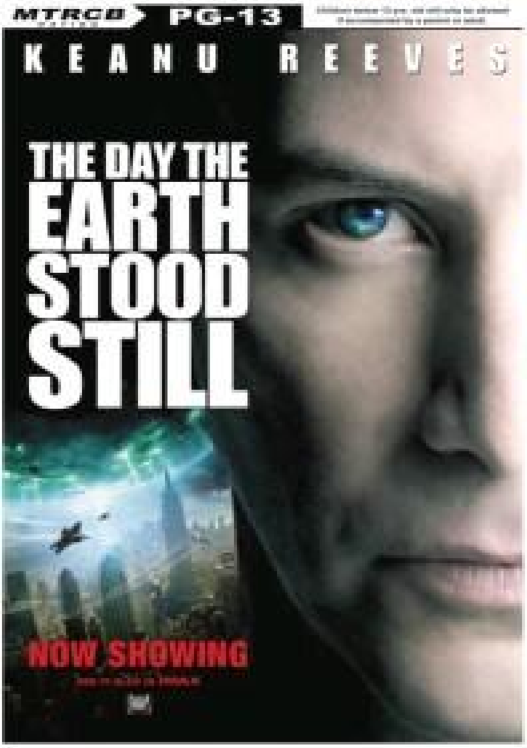
[illegible]

AFP

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 TWILIGHT	2 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL	3 QUARANTINE	4 PRIDE & GLORY
GLORIETTA 4	1 TWILIGHT	2 QUARANTINE	3 BOLT	
	4 [illegible]	5 ROCKNROLLA	6 TWILIGHT	7 FOUR CHRISTMASES
GREENBELT 1	1 TWILIGHT	2 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL		
GREENBELT 3	1 TWILIGHT	2 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL		
	3 PRIDE & GLORY	4 FOUR CHRISTMASES	5 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL	2 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL		
	3 TWILIGHT	4 QUARANTINE	5 FOUR CHRISTMASES	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL	2 TWILIGHT	3 QUARANTINE	4 [illegible]
MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL	2 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL		
	3 TWILIGHT	4 QUARANTINE	5 [illegible]	
TRINOMA	1 FOUR CHRISTMASES	2 QUARANTINE	3 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL	4 TWILIGHT
	5 BOLT	6 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL	7 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL	

AT THE MALLS





REESE Witherspoon and Vince Vaughn are individually likeable but don't mesh as a couple.

4 Christmases, zero fun

LOS ANGELES—THE SIZE difference between Vince Vaughn and Reese Witherspoon isn't the only thing keeping them apart in "Four Christmases."

His signature rat-a-tat overconfidence and her pleasing girl-next-door perkiness turn out to be an awkward mix. Individually likable, Vaughn and Witherspoon never really seem to mesh as a couple.

That's a problem, since we're meant to root for them to stick together. It doesn't help that they're saddled with hackneyed holiday gags: wacky relatives making huge progress miracles, fiascos that cause severe bodily harm, uncomfortable gift exchanges.

Vaughn's Brad and Witherspoon's Kate are a happily unmarried couple sharing a cool industrial-chic home in San Francisco. They lie to their families about doing charity work each year to avoid seeing them during the holidays.

Then, when they're caught live on the news getting stuck at the airport on the way to Fiji, they get roped into visiting both sets of parents, who are divorced. Hence—let's say it together—four Christmases.

Painful

The visiting begins in painfully broad fashion with Brad's family, white-trash stereotypes led by Robert Duvall. The nutty joylessness of this segment makes you wonder how it is possible that it took four screenwriters to come up with this stuff. Next, they're off to see Kate's mom (Mary Steenburgen), who's found the Lord now that she's hooked up with a rock-star preacher (Dwight Yoakam, underused).

Third stop is at Brad's mom's house, and speaking of a complete waste of talent, Sissy Spacek gets to do little but bounce brainlessly in a Holy Manic Country hippie.

Finally they end up at the spooky home of Kate's father (Jon Voight), who is ...

REVIEW

... "Four Christmases" tries tugging at our hearts, with a half-baked conflict about Kate's sudden desire to start a family.

Vaughn makes the movie tolerable here and there, but this kind of slapstick physical comedy doesn't suit Witherspoon at all. Director Seth Gordon simply fails to make optimal use of the qualities that make this bright actress shine. AP



Meralco brightens Season with "A Delightful Christmas"







Important guests were coming. One could easily tell in the buzz of excitement inside Meralco's main lobby. Under a canopy of Christmas finery - ceiling decked with evergreen, bright red poinsettias, shiny Christmas balls in orange hues, and animated Santa Claus figures - Meralco employees hurried about the room with last-minute preparations. And then they arrived - some 60 children from Gawad Kalinga Brookside, each escorted by a Meralco employee volunteer standing as their "ate" or "kuya" for the afternoon. It was the first day of 'A Delightful Christmas', and it was hard to tell who was more excited for the program: the kids or the adults.

Meralco's "A Delightful Christmas", a part of the power company's extensive corporate social responsibility (CSR), is an outreach program where the Meralco Ortigas compound plays host to some 560 children from nine Gawad Kalinga (GK) villages for nine days of gift-giving and lighting-up activities. "A Delightful Christmas gives Meralco employees an opportunity to pay forward their blessings to children from underprivileged backgrounds," says Mr. Manolo Lopez, Chairman & CEO and CSR champion of Meralco. "Because really, Christmas is for sharing, especially with children."

Following the success of the program's first year in 2007, this year's A Delightful Christmas runs from December 2 to 12, and takes on the theme, "Awit Buhay: Voices of Hope". The first day sponsored by the Meralco Office of the Chairman and CEO group, opened with a series of Christmas carols performed by GK Teatron Performing Arts (TAPA), one of the youth chorale groups featured during the 9-day outreach program.

"The boys and girls of GK TAPA, aged 9 to 12, used to roam the streets sniffing rugby, joining riots, and peddling wares. Today, the same boys and girls perform in front of audiences for entertaining and in competitions, showing that poverty and one's past are no hindrance to talent and that there is always hope even in the face of great adversity. The choir's choral director, Peter Marcelino, has so much pride for the group. "These boys and girls work very hard to do what they do, practicing at least 4 hours a day," says Marcelino. "We are thankful for corporations like Meralco who lend their support through programs like A Delightful Christmas. When we let these kids perform, we give hope to their dreams," Marcelino said. This hope is what A Delightful Christmas is all about.

Through dedication in playing out their role for the day, the "ates" and "kuyas" of Meralco showed the kids of Brookside GK Village, in Bagong Silangan Quezon City, that Christmas remains a season for hoping for good things. The Meralco "ates" and "kuyas" assisted the kids as they ate merienda, and even went so far as indulging them in a song and dance numbers. The children were also treated to an amusing performance by the Meralco Liwanag Patrol. The magical team of Kiko Meralco, Engr. Jose Mahusay, Call Center Agent Carla Carifiosa, Branch Head Neha Lagingkanda, and Peter Meter Reader made the children squeal with delight with their dance rendition of such songs as Meralco's "May Liwanag ang Buhay" and singer Joey Albert's "Kumukutikutitap". The children also heard from Kiko Meralco's team about giving, sharing and loving being the true essence of Christmas.

One highlight of the program was the showing of Meralco's new "Hope" TV commercial where Meralco's Manolo Lopez and GK's Tony Meloto gave their Christmas message of hope, with the children of GK Brookside Village as commercial talents.

Probably the most exciting part was the symbolic lighting of 'Barangay Maliwanag'. The kids were brought to the grounds in front of the Lopez building for the unveiling of the one-of-a-kind work of art. As they finished counting off from 10 to 1, a magnificent display of Christmas lights was switched on to reveal a place complete crafted from recycled excess copper wires, complete with a stone church, a house, a replica of a Meralco Silod School and even a manor on from which the kids took turns in riding to tour the Barangay Maliwanag grounds. Meralco's display also features the Nativity scene, with three Meralco workers offering gifts to the infant Christ instead of the traditional Magis. This contemporary take on the Nativity scene symbolizes the Meralco employee's heartfelt commitment in serving the Filipino community.

"Providing light is a lot like providing hope," says Mr. Lopez, who explains that A Delightful Christmas is in line with Meralco's Maliwanag ang Pasko: Campaign of Hope. "When we light up and decorate our homes for Christmas, we are not just lending festivity and color to the Season. More importantly, we are remembering the meaning of this Filipino tradition - that of finding hope in the birth of Jesus Christ, the One True Light. We want to share that hope with the children, themselves the hope of this nation."

Helen Cillo, Site Program Manager of GK Brookside, believes the same thing. "We want to plant the seed of hope in the hearts of our children, hope that a bright future awaits them despite the challenges that they face. We thank the whole Meralco family for sharing the same dream, and for investing their time, effort and blessings on our children." The GK Brookside Village was the recipient of the 12th Meralco Silod School. To express their gratitude for Meralco's continuous support of their community, the Brookside kids made posters, collages and similar artworks in honor of Meralco. Together with Mr. Luis Oquinena, Executive Director of Gawad Kalinga, and Ms. Mari Oquinena, Head of Operations, Ms. Cillo handed over to Mr. Lopez a special poster for the ceremonial presentation of the kids' gifts.

As the program wrapped up and the children of GK claimed their gifts from no less than "Ninong" Manolo Lopez, they were taking home more than just giveaways. They were taking home memories of the Santa-themed Meralco lobby, of the Liwanag Patrol's groovy dance steps, of the fun train ride around the bright Barangay Maliwanag. Most importantly, they were bringing home the memory of a time "ates", "kuyas", "ninongs" and "ninangs" from Meralco cared for them. They were bringing home hope.

Jay-R: Respect everyone

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Coordinator

SINGER-ACTOR JAY-R NOW loud doesn't look like it's going to lighten soon, and he's thankful for that.

The 27-year-old R&B-Ab is busy recording songs with TV host singer Iya Villania for the World Vision Ecumenion, as well as with acting in the GMA 7 soap "La Lola."

The night before an early morning shoot for "Dyesebel 2," Jay-R launched a Christmas album, "Holiday of Love"—sales of which will be donated to the Kapuso Foundation.

He gave an exclusive interview to Inquirer Entertainment during the album launch at Red Box in Trinoma.



A JAZZ-R&B album from Jay-R

TAKE FIVE

What do you know about the industry at this point?

I've been in show biz for five years. I definitely wish I knew what I know now back when I started, I would've done things differently, I think.

What are the challenges now?

Always evolving, actually. But, when I came to the Philippines, there wasn't really a male vocalist at the time. My rise to popularity was pretty fast. The hard part is sustaining it. That's what I'm currently doing.

How has your music evolved?

Well, my R&B was really urban or danceable. Mostly hip-hop/R&B. It's still danceable now, but it's changing. Now it's like real R&B from my last album to jazz R&B with this Christmas album. Paving ... There have Filipino R&B it, I guess. And it still talks about love.

How would you describe the Christmas album?

It's a fusion of jazz and R&B. It's like a new sound for me. At first, I didn't know what I'd come up with, it was fun, because it's really experimental. And when I finished the album, I was pretty satisfied with the results.

How did you choose the songs?

There are 11 songs. They're definitely my favorite Christmas songs when I was growing up. "Sleigh Ride," "The Christmas Song" and "Winter Wonderland." Of course, they're traditional Christmas songs that everybody knows. And also, there are two originals: one that I wrote and one by my sister, Joy.

What's the most important thing you've learning about the music business?

Definitely respect. Respect everyone. Everything is a team effort. It's not just me that's important during a show or recording.

As a Filipino music artist, how do your efforts contribute to the big picture?

I know from some kids that I've seen are going ... in the 'pop' style ba. I think I'm contributing my best as a vocal ... I'm very proud. So I think I will be a teacher as a contribution to Filipino music.